THE WOMAN WHO TIRED OF LIFE AFTER 108 YEARS

To live a hundred and eight years in peace and plenty and with more than the ordinary share of happiness; to witness the administration of every President of the United States, with the exception of Washington; to follow the growth of this country from obscurity to greatness; and then, tiring at last of the struggle, to destroy the life that had endured so long, is the biography, in brief, of Mrs. Mary McKittrick, who on Monday last committed suicide by cutting her throat with a knife.

She was one of the oldest women in the world and retained until near the last remarkable mental and physical vigor. It has been only a year or two since she gave up her practice of walking a mile, to attend church. There was nothing funereal about her, either. Those who knew the old woman well say she was as bright as a lark and as merry as a cricket.

Mrs. McKittrick lived with her son, Luke McKittrick, near Allentown, Pa. She went to bed Sunday night in seeming good health and spirits. Her daughter-in-law tucked the old woman carefully among the blankets and wished her the sweetest of sweet dreams.

"May God give you a soft bed in heaven, my dear," was the mother-in-law's response.

Sight of the Tragedy

The next morning the younger Mrs. McKittrick went to call Mrs. Mary McKittrick to breakfast. This was at 10 o'clock, for the latter had requested she be not disturbed. She would call for her breakfast when she wanted it, she said. No dream of the impending tragedy had entered the mind of any members of the family. The more startling and dreadful, therefore, was the sight presented to young Mrs. McKittrick's eyes.

The dead body of her mother-in-law lay on the floor, near the bed. There was a deep gash in the neck, and near the nerveless hand a bloody pocket knife. The knife had been given the old woman by her husband forty years ago and long before his death. It was one of her dearest treasures, that she cherished with an almost superstitious fondness. Some grim fancy, commingled of the poetic and the morbid, had induced her to use the old weapon in destroying the life she had grown to hate, and in rejoining the husband she had never ceased to love.

She had left behind her no message to explain her suicide. There was not a written word, not a scrap of paper. She had never given any intimation that she contemplated so dreadful a deed.

There had been indications, however, that she had grown tired of living. The activity that had been hers all her life of late had deserted her, and much of the time she had been compelled to keep to her bed. She was not as alert mentally, and there were extended periods when she seemed to realize little of what occurred about her. She remained plunged in meditation, dreaming over, perhaps, the days of her youth. Perhaps in one of these reveries the purpose to end her life took possession of her mind.

Sympathy Was Universal

The tragedy excited the widest interest in and around Uniontown, where Mrs. McKittrick had been known for more than half a century. The active, bright, old woman, hobbling cheerfully over the country roads, was a familiar figure, and children and their elders had learned to expect and welcome her piping greeting. It took always one form.

"Health, wealth, and prosperity, and may you live as long as I have," was the invariable phrase.

She was a child of the rebellion, having been born in County Kildare, Ireland, during the troublous times of '98. The pikes were out then and burning ricks lighted the Irish nights. There were enough burnings and hangings to furnish the simple folk with food for countless conversations. She was cradled in trouble.

Not that she minded that. Mary Butler, as she was then, married McKittrick and came early across the seas. She had been through wars and pestilences and political campaigns and managed to extract a reasonable amount of amusement from them all. She had seen the Molly Maguires rise to power and influence in Pennsylvania and then fall to their destruction. She had contributed of her own blood to the cause of her adopted country, for two of her grandsons were drowned when the Maine went down in the harbor of Havana.

A Quaint Little Figure

She was a quaint looking little woman, less than five feet in height and weighing not more than eighty pounds. Despite her diminutive build and apparent weakness she was the mother of a big family, ten children having been born during her long wedded life. Only two of them, however, are now living in this country.

She came naturally by her longevity. Her grandmother, it is said, was 106 years old when she died, death resulting from the kick of a cow that precipitated the old woman into a canal. The mother of Mrs. McKittrick lived to be a hundred. Other members of her family attained ripe old ages, before they answered the call of the reaper.

She had her ambitions, had Mrs. McKittrick. One of them was to ride in an automobile, and she gratified it several months ago. A motor-car owner passing through her part of the country on tour was told of the old woman's wish and proffered the use of his machine and his own services as chauffeur. In a car that cost a small fortune and which is quite capable of violating all the speed laws of all the States, the trip was made.

Mrs. McKittrick hung on a bit desperately when the machine rounded sharp corners at top speed, but she never whimpered, and declared she had enjoyed the ride amazingly.

One other of her ambitions she did not live to realize. The pictures of the skyscrapers in the big cities had appealed wonderfully to her fancy, and she had acquired a fervent desire to ride in the elevator of one of them from the bottom floor to the top of the building. Then she wanted to descend, and see how quickly the trip would be made.

Observed Last Birthday

On March 17, St. Patrick's Day, she celebrated the last anniversary of her birth, rounding out that day her 108th year. To her family and friends, gathered around her for the celebration, Mrs. McKittrick expressed her ambition about the elevator, and most of those who heard her declared she should gratify it at the earliest possible opportunity. Unhappily, the opportunity never came.

She had a theory, too, about the proper way to live and the rules of health to observe in order to prolong life. Moderation would sum up her doctrine.

"I think people would be much healthier," she was fond of saying, "if they would only be more careful about what they eat. Milk, butter, and potatoes have been my chief diet for many years. I drink tea, but I never tasted coffee. I never eat cake or pie."

She was a living proof of the value of her advice, so far, at any rate, as it concerned herself. She required the services of a physician just once in her long life, and that was on an occasion when she stumbled and fell down a flight of stairs.

Sympathy with the grief of her son and his family and a sense of personal loss were the unanimous expressions of the community at her death. It is believed her suicide is quite unique, history recording no parallel case. When a person has lived beyond the century mark life loses its acerbities. The days pass smoothly, quietly, and happily, and the old man or woman appears quite content to drift into the endless sleep without hastening its approach.

Not so Mrs. McKittrick. She tired, and sought her rest.

WHEN PAW GOES FOR TROUT.

I've been up sence before 'twas light,
A-diggin' worms, b'jings!
An' paw's been foolin' half the night
With fishin' lines an' things.
He's fixed his rod an' reel an' flies,
An jest got started out;
Maw says 'at he'll bring home some lies,
Sence paw has gone fer trout.

Paw's been a-braggin' what he'd do
As soon's the season come;
An' when you talk o' fishin'—whew!
Paw he can make things hum!
He's jest a reg'ler cracker-jack—
You ought to hear him spout!
Oh, you jest wait till he gits back—
'Cuz paw has gone fer trout!

Why, down there to the store one night,
I heared ol' Beaney Brown,
Say 'at they wa'n't no man 'twas quite
So good as paw in town;
That is, on ketchin' fish, I mean
An' so they hain't no doubt
That ev'rything is all serene
When paw goes out fer trout.

They's lots of other men, I know,
'At's smarter than my paw,
An' lots o' more is mighty slow
'Longside o' him, sez maw;
But when it comes to fishin'—say,
Paw knows what he's about!
The other fellers stays away
When paw goes out fer trout!

When paw's home with the fish he's caught,
He'll have a lot to say
About th- big ones that he brought
An' them what got away.
When I'm growed up an' fishin' go,
I'll come back home an' spout,
Just as paw allus does, you know,
When he goes out fer trout!

—E. A. Brininstool, in Los Angeles Express

MADDENED BY TORTURE YET HE FOUND HIS HOME ACROSS 400 MILES OF DESERT

IN the Santa Rosa Hospital at San Antonio, Tex., is a man who, if his story is true, has recently passed through an ordeal more terrible than Kipling's "Man Who Was."

Crazed by his suffering the man, whose name is William Craigh, talks constantly of a gold mine in Sonora, Mexico, and in his delirium lives over again the hardships of his escape from the Yaqui Indians, who killed his partner and drove him from the Sonora hills.

When Craigh was discovered several weeks ago wandering about the streets of San Antonio in a demented condition a small buckskin sack, containing five large nuggets of pure gold, was found suspended about his neck. When an effort was made to remove the sack Craigh fought the officers like a wild man; and now, as he lies upon his bed in the hospital, his hand reaches up and grasps the sack every few minutes as if to assure himself that the gold is still there.

City Detective George Shoaf met Craigh on the street about two weeks ago. His clothes were in tatters, his hair and beard long and matted, and his bleeding feet protruded from the holes in his high top boots. The detective questioned Craigh, and as he could not understand what was said to him the officer arrested him for being a vagrant.

Exhaustion and Dementia.

Craigh was taken to the city jail and locked up, but his actions were so strange that the desk sergeant summoned a physician. After an examination the doctor declared the man demented, and that his condition was caused by exhaustion and starvation. Craigh was at once removed to the hospital and given careful attention and nursing.

After several days in the hospital the man recovered sufficiently to talk, and he confided to the doctor the story of his wonderful gold mine. He did not tell the story connectedly, but little by little the doctor heard the tale of the wonderful escape and journey of the little Irishman.

A year ago Craigh was discharged from the United States army. He formed a partnership with another ex-soldier named Wilson, and the two men started on a prospecting expedition through the mountains of Arizona. After several months of hard work Craigh and his chum decided to try their luck in the forbidden land of the Yaqui Indians in the State of Sonora, Mexico.

They were warned not to trust their lives among the Yaquis, but the stories of the wonderful guarded mines of the Sonora mountains lured them into the dangerous country.

They purchased an outfit of tools and provisions at Bisbee, Ariz., and then crossed the Mexican border and started on their long overland journey.

Pursued by Misfortune.

Misfortune seemed to pursue the two men from the first; and shortly after they entered Mexico, a party of "ladrones" raided their camp and stole one of their pack mules and part of their provisions. Craigh and Wilson had been on hard "hikes" before, however, and refused to turn back.

At the little town of Hermosillo the authorities tried to persuade the miners to stay out of the Yaqui country; but they would not listen to advice and pushed on into the Sierra Madre mountains.

After several weeks of prospecting, a placer mine of wonderful richness was discovered. The gold was found in the bed of a stream, and according to the descriptions given by Craigh, the sands fairly sparkled with the precious metal.

Pitching camp on the spot, the two men began washing out the gold. It was their intention to pan out as much as possible in a few weeks and then return to the United States and purchase a larger outfit and organize a party of miners.

Their provisions ran low, but they subsisted by killing the game that was abundant in the valley. Up to this time they had seen no sign of the Indians and had lost faith in the tales they had heard of the cruelty of the savages.

Indians strike, however, as lightning strikes, when least expected. Returning from a hunt, Craigh found the camp looted and Wilson lying dead beside the burning sluice boxes. The body of the unfortunate Wilson was mutilated in a horrible manner and the horses were stolen.

Craigh realized that the Yaquis were probably searching through the valley for him and were liable to return at any moment, so hastily gathering together a few scraps of food he climbed the mountain side and concealed himself in the rocky caves near the top.

The handful of nuggets in the buckskin sack hanging around his neck was all that remained to him of the wealth of gold that had been his that morning.

Then began the most trying journey that a human being ever undertook—a journey that led through the mountains and deserts of northern Mexico and ended in the jail at San Antonio, Tex. Without a horse Craigh's progress through the mountains was slow and as he dared not shoot at game for fear of attracting the attention of Indians he was forced to eat roots and berries gathered along the waterways.

Begged Piteously for Water.

When Craigh finally emerged from the mountains and started to cross the alkali plains he was crazed by the hardships he had endured, and lost all sense of direction. He clung to the idea that help could be found to the eastward, and pressed on in that direction. How long he walked he does not know, but as he lay upon his bed in the hospital he talked continually of the terrible sun and begged piteously for water.

Finally he staggered into the camp of a company of Mexican soldiers, and although they cared for him and gave him food and water it was many days before he could tell of his journey. Overjoyed at the sight of the soldiers he told them of his gold mine and of its wonderful richness.

The story of the mine excited the cupidity of the soldiers, and the lieutenant in command of the party demanded that Craigh guide them back to the spot. This Craigh refused to do and by the orders of the officer he was beaten with a whip and told that he would be beaten to death unless he led the soldiers to the mine.

That night Craigh managed to steal away and escape from the soldiers. Still weak from the effects of his journey through the desert he again set his face to the eastward.

Craigh's memory of what took place after his escape from the soldiers' camp is vague. Most of the time he must have been demented. He says that he remembers finding streams of water and lying down to wallow, full length, in the life giving fluid, then leaving the stream to turn his footsteps to the east.

Fed by Peons and Ranchmen.

Later he reached the more thickly settled portion of the country and the peons and ranchmen fed him. The Mexicans looked upon his strange looking figure and staring eyes and said that he was a "loco"—and in Mexico a crazy man need never want for food or shelter, as the natives look upon him with superstitious awe.

The strangest part of Craigh's story is the way he followed the true course, like a homing pigeon, straight to his old home, for his father, who formerly lived in Chicago, has a farm near Boerne, Tex., twenty miles east of San Antonio, and it is supposed that he was making for his father's farm when he was arrested.

With his mind made a wreck by the terrible hardships he had endured and with only his voice of instinct calling him home, William Craigh finished his journey.

Craigh's father and brother are now at San Antonio. They corroborate his story up to the time he left Hermosillo, Mexico, for the Yaqui country and show a letter received from him from that town. There is little doubt that the wonderful mine really exists and there is some talk of organizing an expedition to search for it.

The doctors say that it will be many weeks before Craigh will be able to leave the hospital.

WINTER'S TALE IN PASSING.

I am getting near my finish,
And the end's about in sight,
Every day my means diminish,
On my work there seems a blight,
Nor can I explain the reason
Why I'm suffering such ills,
But I must say it's a season
Of dire failure of my chills.

—Indianapolis News.

YOUR TIME WILL COME!

"When Satan
Takin' holliday,
Don't fool yo'se'f
An shout 'Hooray!'—
Yo' time will come
Some other day!"

—Atlanta Constitution.

Effect of Color on the Public Health as Well as a Cure for Disease

HOW far the use of color may affect the public health, or even act as a cure for particular diseases, is once more receiving the attention of certain sections of the medical profession.

In a medical journal it was recently contended that certain colors have a favorable effect upon sufferers from phthisis, and it was recommended that consumptives should carefully select their clothing with the view of employing only those colors that are inimical to the disease. The theory is that certain rays of light have a bactericidal effect, and therefore the clothing should be of such colors as will allow free access to the beneficial rays.

Obviously this theory is no new one, for it is the basis on which the late Dr. Finsen reared his memorable "light cure" for lupus and similar diseases. Finsen himself was led to his conclusions by the practice of medical men who employed various colors in the cure of disease long before the modern germ theory had been evolved.

More than thirty years ago Dr. Pancoast published a very curious book, entitled "Blue and Red Light." In this volume are detailed many cases of cures effected by the employment of different colors. Tinted illustrations are given of the doctor's blue and red rooms, in which the patients, dressed in garments of either color, recline on couches directly under the sunlight filtered through blue or red glass.

Later another Philadelphian, Gen. A. J. Pleasonton, published a book entitled "Blue and Sunlight: Their Influence Upon Life and Disease," and for a short time there swept over America a craze for the use of the color blue. The general and his system were overwhelmed with abouse and ridicule, but Dr. Finsen, on being asked his opinion of the book, remarked emphatically, "The general was absolutely on the right track."

Pleasonton gave many instances of disease said to have been ameliorated by the use of blue light, and claimed to have effected a complete cure of a case of contusion by three exposures of half an hour each. In these contentions the American has received recent support by the statement of a St. Petersburg physician, who by the use of the same agent, has been completely successful in the treatment of the following cases: Swollen hand from bee sting, enlarged gland, earache, bruises, bronchitis and X-ray blisters.

It has also been pointed out that blue light has a soothing, soporific effect upon the nerves, and of this reason more than one hospital uses blue glass chimneys upon the lamps in its sick wards. With a like object in view, blue eyeglasses have been recommended with very beneficial effects for the insane.

In this connection it is curious to note that the common expression, 'fit of the blues," used to describe a condition of mental depression, is said to owe its origin to the observed fact that indigo dyers invariably become melancholy.

During his researches into the action of light upon the skin Doctor Finsen chanced upon a pamphlet in the medical library of Copenhagen published in 1832 by Doctor Picton of New Orleans. In this pamphlet was the accidental mention of the fact that during a certain epidemic of smallpox some soldiers confined in dark dungeons had suffered the disease and recovered without the hideous scarring that was the common feature of the complaint. This led the doctor to investigate the effect of light upon the progress of this particular malady, with the result that he was soon brought to the conclusion that the apparently fantastic treatment of some of the earlier physicians had a solid basis in fact.

John of Gallesden, who wrote the famous medical treatise—the earliest in the English language—"Rosa Medicinae," and who died in 1361, treated the son of King Edward I for smallpox by covering him with scarlet blankets and a red counterpane. He placed him in a room draped with hangings of a similar hue, caused him to gargle his throat with mulberry wine and to eat the juice of red pomegranates. As a result of this bizarre treatment the physician had the satisfaction of seeing his patient recover without showing any trace or scar of the complaint.

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth one of the court physicians also employed similar methods with marked success, and the practice was revived to some extent during the reign of Charles II. Finsen also discovered that in China, Japan and Roumania it had been usual for centuries past to swathe the face and hands of smallpox patients in red cloth.

As a result of these observations the Swedish doctor placed patients suffering with the disease in apartments into which the sun's rays could only penetrate through sheets of red glass, with the result that the symptoms immediately assumed a much milder character, the fever disappearing and the temperature becoming normal. On the other hand, if a patient but partially recovered ventured into the naked rays of the sun he was liable to a recrudescence of the malady.

The net results of all these investigations served to show the immense importance of light as a merapeutic agent.

DID YOU EVER?

I saw a horse-fly up the creek,
A cat-nip at her food;
I saw a chestnut-burr, and heard
A shell-bark in the woods.

—Maverick.